

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Under the CEQ regulations for implementation of NEPA, an EA must identify and explain the "range of alternatives" (40 CFR 1502.14). This includes the Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts. All reasonable alternatives must be rigorously explored and objectively evaluated. Any alternatives found to be unreasonable can be eliminated from detailed study, with a brief discussion of the reasons for their removal. In addition, consideration of a no action alternative is required.

The Proposed Action (Alternative I, the Proposed Project) and subject of this EA is to Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland. One alternative to the Proposed Action was identified: Do Not Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland (Alternative II, No Action). Both of these alternatives are deemed to be reasonable.

These alternatives are briefly discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 below. Environmental analyses of the alternatives are comprised of detailed discussion of the existing (baseline) environment in Sections 4.1 through 4.23, review of the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action in Section 5.2, and comparison of the two alternatives in Section 5.3 and Section 5.4.

3.1 ALTERNATIVE I – IMPLEMENT THE LAND USE PLAN FOR FORT DETRICK, MARYLAND

Alternative I (the Proposed Projects) is to Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland (the Proposed Action), that is, to continue the Proposed Projects for construction and operation of new facilities and infrastructural improvements at Fort Detrick, as described in Section 2.5. This alternative will replace antiquated, poorly situated, energy inefficient, and maintenance intensive existing buildings, consolidating related administrative, communications, and community services activities in new modern facilities, and providing much-needed infrastructural improvements that will enable Fort Detrick and its tenants to advance their respective missions, as established in Section 1.1. The potential adverse environmental impacts of this alternative were found to be negligible to minor and mitigable and offset to some extent by potential beneficial impacts (see Section 5.2).

3.2 ALTERNATIVE II – DO NOT IMPLEMENT THE LAND USE PLAN FOR FORT DETRICK, MARYLAND – (NO ACTION)

Alternative II, the No Action alternative, is Do Not Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland, that is, to discontinue the Proposed Projects for construction and operation of new facilities and infrastructural improvements, as described in Section 2.5, that otherwise would enable Fort Detrick and its tenants to advance their respective missions, as established in Section 1.1. This alternative would avoid the potential adverse environmental impacts associated with Alternative I, but it would eliminate the beneficial impacts.

Alternative II would not replace existing antiquated, poorly situated, energy inefficient, and maintenance intensive buildings would continue in service. Administrative, communications, and community services activities would have to continue operations in functionally inefficient separate facilities. Much-needed infrastructural improvements would be postponed or abandoned. If the Proposed Action is not implemented, USAG and its tenants would not be as effective at meeting

their respective mission requirements. Other benefits of the Proposed Action described in Section 1.0 would not be achieved.

This No Action alternative is included in accordance with the CEQ regulations. Although Alternative II is not the preferred alternative, it does establish the baseline to which Alternative I can be compared.